MONOPOLY.

PRICE SIX-PENCE.

THE

CUTTING BUTCHERS

APPEAL

TO

THE LEGISLATURE,

UPON THE

HIGH PRICE OF MEAT:

IN WHICH MANY OF THE BASE PRACTICES OF SMITHFIELD MARKET ARE EXPOSED,

AND A

REMEDY POINTED OUT FOR THE POOR.

By a PHILANTHROPIC BUTCHER.

A NEW EDITION.

"THE BLACK ARTS OF MONOPOLY WILL RUIN ALL." Molyneux.

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THE
CUTTING BUTCHERS'
APPEAL TO THE LEGISLATURE
UPON THE
PRESENT HIGH PRICE OF MEAT
AND PROVISIONS.

I SHALL make no apology, in a period ſo momentous and alarming as the preſent, for introducing this ſcrutinizing Eſſay to the Public eye; inaſmuch as the deareſt intereſts of Society, are perhaps involved in the immediate reduction of the preſent high prices of proviſions, of every deſcription, but particularly MEAT, which is kept up to the preſent enormous demand, by the *ſhameful arts* practiſed in *Smithfield Market*; where the *Grazier*, the *Saleſman*, and the *Carcaſe Butcher*, unite to oppreſs the *Cutting Butcher*, who is the apparent agent to ſupply the community with meat,—and to expoſe theſe baſe practices, at the fountain of ſupply, in this great metropolis, is the intent of this limited performance.—I conceive that both my intereſt and my duty unite, to impel me to exhibit ſuch nefarious men in their proper colours, who eagerly and unfeelingly ſqueeze great fortunes out of the bowels of the poor, by heaping an *artificial want* upon the back of *partial diſtreſs!*

I ſhall now proceed to enquire into the preſent ſtate of the London Markets, and ſubſtantiate, by calamitous facts, thoſe heavy charges againſt Monopoliſts which I have aſſerted, and ſhall labour, in the concluſion, to point out a remedy for ſuch ſerious abuſes of power and ſituation.

The lamentations of the poorer claſſes of Society, who almoſt inceſſantly ſurround my ſhop, to regard, with the moſt

painful ſolicitude, that food which they cannot purchaſe, and which I cannot afford to beſtow, firſt inclined me to ponder upon the ſtate of the markets, and when I had made an adequate compariſon between the produce of the country, and the expence and difficulty of procuring that produce on the part of the people, I was ſmote with the conviction that there muſt be ſome latent impoſitions practiſed, which the happineſs, ſecurity, and peace of all required ſhould be inſtantly developed.

The difficulty of aſcertaining truth, is more conducive to the intereſts of the fraudulent than the juſt, and operates, but too frequently, to make the innocent ſuffer for the guilty; hence ariſe thoſe ill directed murmurings from a ſuffering, but undiſcriminating multitude, towards the BUTCHER and BAKER, which ſhould be levelled at higher agents; it is with Smithfield Market, as with the *Corn Market*, where the price is not regulated by the quantity of meal, but the artifices of the Seller.

I have been peculiarly attentive to the crooked arts carried on in Smithfield Market for the laſt twelve months, but ſhall confine myſelf, more particularly to this ſeaſon.—I am now going to declare a circumſtance, which will undoubtedly ſurpriſe my readers; namely, that the ſhow of oxen in Smithfield Market, has been greater than I ever recollect to have ſeen before, at this time of the year: not relying entirely upon my own judgment, I have enquired much among the moſt intelligent of the *Cutting Butchers* why the cattle were ſo very high in price, when there were ſuch vaſt droves in the market: the uniform anſwer to all theſe queſtions was, that the *Carcaſe Butchers* were the cauſe of that high demand, and this deſcription of men are very numerous, very rich, and of courſe very commanding and powerful:—very early in the morning, on the market day, and very often on the preceding evening, three fourths of the cattle are foreſtalled by the *Carcaſe Butcher*, ſo that although there may be a great ſhew, the *Cutting Butcher*, in reality, finds a ſcarcity, and it is on thoſe occaſions

that

that the *Saleſmen* put their irregular deſigns in execution, by forcing the numerous little *Cutting Butchers* to comply with any terms they may think proper to propoſe, and in the caſe of a refuſal, to ſend their cattle to the *Carcaſe Butcher*, to kill by commiſſion, when his caprice may urge him; and leave the *Cutting Butcher* to return home at his leiſure, without a ſupply of meat for his cuſtomers!—a few days ago, oxen were ſold to the *Carcaſe Butcher* from 5d to 5½d. per pound, and the * offal at its value, when the *Cutting Butcher* was compelled to give a penny more; thus was he obliged to raiſe the price to his cuſtomers, when there was no real neceſſity in the origin to juſtify ſuch extortion.

Theſe manifeſt diſadvantages, will be duly enforced by the following confeſſion of a *Carcaſe Butcher* to a *Cutting Butcher*. On Monday evening the 4th Inſt. a *Cutting Butcher* cheapened a ſheep in White Chapel Market, of a *Carcaſe Butcher*, the price demanded was ſeven pence halfpenny per pound, the *Cutting Butcher* bid ſeven pence; the *Carcaſe Butcher* replied, that he would treat him on the ſame terms as he, the *Carcaſe Butcher*, was treated by the *Saleſman* in Smithfield; where having cheapened fifty ſheep from the *Saleſman*, he, the ſaid *Carcaſe Butcher*, thinking the price too much, the *Saleſman* gave him the indulgence of half an hour, to lay his money out to a greater advantage, and in caſe of a diſappointment, he might rely upon having them, as he would not negociate with any other perſon, until he had received a definitive anſwer from him:—the *Carcaſe Butcher* returned and purchaſed them, finding the market rather thin; the conſequence of this was that the *Cutting Butcher* was deprived of the opportunity of making a purchaſe, for the accommodation of the public:—hence it clearly appears that the *Cutting Butcher*, who is the immediate organ to ſell it to the community, is ſacrificed to the intereſted and diſengenuous views of

* The offal conſiſts of the hide, head, fat, &c.

the *Saleſman* and *Carcaſe Butcher*, who form a ruinous confederacy, to maintain the exorbitant demands in Smithfield Market, to the immediate injury of the *Cutting Butcher* and eventually to the injury of the public !

On Friday, the 1ſt. of May, a *Cutting Butcher* attended Smithfield Market, very early in the morning, to purchaſe cattle, and having ſeen three *good Scots* or *home breds*, was deſirous of becoming a purchaſer, and being there when thoſe cattle came in, conceived himſelf entitled to purchaſe them for his cuſtomers; finding the *Saleſman* had not arrived at market, he went to meet him, and aſked him the price of thoſe *oxen;* he replied that he was but a *ſecond* cuſtomer, as a *Carcaſe Butcher* had been promiſed the refuſal of the cattle, on the preceding night. The *Cutting Butcher*, anxious to ſee the reſult, waited until the *Carcaſe Butcher* came, who inſtantly marked them with his ſciſſars, as his own property, without examining the points or ſtate of the beaſts, leaving it entirely to the *honor* of the *Saleſman*, to uſe him well and juſtly, although that *honor* and that attention would have been denied to the *Cutting Butcher !*

The *Cutting Butcher* has not the opportunity of being even cautious in his demeanour in the market, reſpecting the purchaſe of cattle, inaſmuch, as he is deprived of the opportunity to purchaſe any, if he heſitates to give, in the firſt inſtance, whatever is demanded, as the *Carcaſe Butcher* will ſweep the whole away, and then grind him agreeably to his own wiſhes.

The melancholy conviction ariſing from ſuch events, is, (and it may be neceſſary to add, that ſuch events are very common) that even if the Legiſlature were to enforce the *Grazier* to ſend his cattle to market, there is ſuch a cloſe and villainous eſtabliſhment formed, and ſuch a chain of progreſſive evils in exiſtence, that the public could not derive any eſſential good, from that benevolent obligation, as it would be ſo or-

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dered that the cattle would be diſpoſed of *only* to thoſe perſons who were in the ſecret, or, as they phraſe it, *rowed in the ſame boat*, to the utter excluſion of the numerous little *Cutting Butchers* of the metropolis, who might be anxiouſly waiting there, to make purchaſes, to remove a general neceſſity.

There is another irregular meaſure well known to the *Money Takers* of Smithfield Market. I allude to the CREDIT given there, which cannot be ſuppoſed as entirely conſonant to the powers of the Saleſman's commiſſion, inaſmuch as it gives him the opportunity of ſending ſuch cattle to certain embarraſſed perſons, as may be very *convenient* to him as a Saleſman, but will be very detrimental to the public. This evil may be proved in all its ramifications, from an inſpection of the Smithfield Market accounts.

There is another art which is perpetrated between the *Carcaſe Butcher* and the *Grazier*, which has a great tendancy to enhance the price of butcher's meat, this is called *Commiſſion Buſineſs*, and is thus managed: the *Grazier* (not content with the profits of feeding the cattle) inſtead of ſending them fairly to market, acquaints his commiſſioner in London, that he has cattle which he intends to have killed, and leaves it to his agent to have them when he thinks they will fetch the greateſt price. As thoſe *Carcaſe Butchers* are opulent men, and moſt of them poſſeſſed of land, they have an opportunity of killing them, or keeping them longer, as beſt ſuits their ungenerous purpoſes; therefore, when Smithfield proves thin of cattle, and the price is advanced to *their* ſatisfaction, thoſe cattle, (which if they had been ſent to market, as they ought to have been, might have prevented that advance) are killed, and ſold by the *Carcaſe Butcher* at the advanced price, to the retail butcher, and conſequently, the conſumer muſt pay heavily for this artificial ſcarcity. There is another very injurious practice which is carried on in Smithfield, which wounds the public; this is done by a ſet of men, who get their living by

buying cattle on one ſide of Smithfield, and ſending them to another ſaleſman to ſell, immediately they have bought them.

No *Carcaſe Butcher* ſhould be permitted to kill *mutton*, *beef*, or *lamb*, within ten miles of the metropolis; for the queſtion now at iſſue, is, which party is to be accommodated, the *Public* or the *Carcaſe Butcher ?*—In all occurrences between the *Carcaſe Butcher* and the *Cutting Butcher*, the latter is uniformly ſacrificed to the former; the *Cutting Butcher* is labouring to keep the markets down, while the *Carcaſe Butcher* feeds the *Saleſman's* extortion at the expence of the public; the *feeder of the cattle* is not benefitted by theſe improper proceedings, as the *Carcaſe Butcher* interferes as an evil agent, to the deſtruction of him, the *Cutting Butcher* and the *Public*. Some effectual means muſt be uſed to ſtop this SMITHFIELD WICKEDNESS, or all parties may equally rue the iſſue, for the *Carcaſe Butchers* are increaſing, and the *Cutting Butchers* are decreaſing daily. The dark cunning with which the villany of Smithfield is purſued, renders it almoſt inſcrutable, yet it all tends to the diſadvantage of the *Cutting Butcher*, in the firſt inſtance, and the *Public* eventually. On Monday, April 27, 1795, a cow was purchaſed for £.16. on one ſide of Smithfield market, and ſold on the other ſide, for £.17. 10s. within the ſpace of a quarter of an hour.—A reſpectable gentleman, who reſides in the neighbourhood of Leiceſter, actuated by philanthropic motives, recently ſent up ſix ſcore of ſheep to Smithfield market, but his kind views were fruſtrated, *for not being one of the gang*, his ſheep were ſold for ſix ſhillings per head leſs than they would have brought in Leiceſter market, and what renders the trick and colluſion ſo palpable in this affair, is, that the price of mutton, was at that period, twopence-halfpenny per pound cheaper in the Leiceſter market, than at the London markets! The names of the parties, in either inſtance, are ſuppreſſed from motives of delicacy, but they ſhall inſtantly be brought forward, if neceſſary.

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A majority of the *Carcaſe Butchers*, who may be conſidered as the parents of nearly every inconvenience reſpecting the high prices of proviſions, were originally *Cutting Butchers*, and thus, by connecting a knowledge of all the branches of the victualling line, they are enabled to be widely miſchievous; it is not my deſire to depreciate their calling, but to do away that part of their practice, which, as an honeſt and feeling man, I deem *unlawful;* they deprive the Cutting Butcher of many privileges to which, as a tradeſman, he is honorably entitled: *Firſt*, by doing commiſſion buſineſs in the killing way, they are not ſatisfied with the uſual reward of one ſhilling per head, on *ſheep* and *lambs*, and other cattle in proportion; but will by diſingenuous arts, raiſe their advantages* to nearly two—thus reducing them to the neceſſity of laying an additional profit upon the bare carcaſe, which muſt enhance the price to the conſumer. *Secondly*, when articles are riſing in value at market, the Carcaſe Butcher ſends information to his employer in the country, and the cattle are in conſequence withheld, or ſent up, as beſt ſuits their views in feeding the market, without deigning to take into his conſideration, the inconveniences to which the Cutting Butcher is ſubjected, or the wants of an impoveriſhed and hungry community!

When the *Grazier* knows that his cattle have had their full time, he conſigns them to the Carcaſe Butcher on commiſſion; but when they have *not* had their proper time, he condeſcends to ſend them to Smithfield, for the reception of the Cutting Butcher; by which artifice the Cutting Butcher muſt pay for prime meat, whatever the Carcaſe Butcher may be inclined to require; and is only left the melancholy opportunity of purchaſing *directly*, in Smithfield market, generally ſpeaking, the worſt cattle; it is unneceſſary to add, that the evil in either caſe, muſt devolve upon the general conſumer.

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* Theſe *advantages* are equally ruinous to the *Grazier* and *Cutting Butcher*.

The GREAT PRIMARY CAUSE of this temporary miſery is the conſolidation of little farms into great farms, yet the calamity, as it is, might be thus reduced if not prevented.

No perſon ſhould be permitted to export *corn* or *cattle*; if a ſtatute of this tendency, was properly enforced, we ſhould ſoon have our proviſions much cheaper; the owners of landed property might falſely conceive themſelves to be injured by ſuch a meaſure, but on reflection they muſt know, that though their income might be leſs, their expenditure would be diminiſhed in an equal proportion; they would alſo enjoy the ſupreme luxury of removing the woes of their fellow creatures, and prevent ſuch lamentable emigrations among our poorer manufacturers.

It muſt be admitted, that the ſevere winter has deſtroyed the turnips in moſt countries, which was the great dependance for the cattle in many places, and eſpecially ſheep; by this loſs, the *Grazier* being obliged to ſubſtitute corn, and other coſtly food in their ſtead, muſt enhance the value of the cattle, and vegetation being very backward, no cattle could be made fit for market, but by thoſe extraordinary means, which has given the *Grazier* an opportunity of advancing his price according to the additional expence; yet I will not admit, that there has been, at any period this ſeaſon, a ſcarcity of cattle, in any way proportioned to the advance in price.

It is a fact, too well known to be doubted, that the Carcaſe Butchers have a very great advantage over the Retail Butcher, by being able to buy and diſpenſe with, a much larger quantity of cattle; for it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that a ſaleſman, like other tradeſmen, will give the preference of ſale, to the greateſt cuſtomer; and this is carried on to ſuch a length at this time, as almoſt to deprive the Retail Butcher, of an opportunity of purchaſing ſuch a quantity of cattle as is convenient for his conſumption, conſequently, when ſuch a lot offers, he is glad to buy, though at an advanced price, which is generally the caſe.

It is well known, that the Carcaſe Butchers ride out conſtantly

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to meet the droves at the different roads leading to the metropolis, and buy very large quantities, and the beſt of the cattle, before they reach Smithfield at all, by which means Smithfield proves thin of cattle, and the prices are advanced accordingly ; which might not have been the caſe, if thoſe cattle had come fairly to Smithfield ; be this as it may, the Cutting Butcher is obliged to buy at the higheſt price, or lay himſelf at the mercy of the Carcaſe Butcher, where he can have but little hope of mending his market.

Independently of that, the Carcaſe Butchers give an opportunity to an obſtinate ſaleſman, (who after trying the market ſix or eight hours, and being determined not to ſell his goods till he can make his price, whether they are worth it or not,) of ſending ſuch cattle to their ſhops, to be killed and ſold by commiſſion. By theſe and many other injurious practices, they are enabled to keep meat much dearer, than there is any real neceſſity for it to be.

The *ſaleſmen* in Smithfield being very numerous, are too fearful of loſing any of their employers, and from this apprehenſion, ariſes a conſiderable injury to the public ; as it cauſes them to ſend down the higheſt prices to the *Graziers* in the country, which they intend ſhould operate as a recommendation of themſelves, although it muſt terminate to the diſadvantage of the conſumer. When the ſaleſman diſcovers that the Cutting Butcher will not agree to his exorbitant demand, he ſends them to the Carcaſe Butcher, on commiſſion, giving them every opportunity of improving their time: the Carcaſe Butcher, knowing the ſecret reaſon why they are ſent, then ſells to the Cutting Butcher, as dear as he can, to ſatisfy the ſaleſman, having an eye to future favors. In all purchaſing concerns, the Cutting Butcher is looked upon as hardly worth their notice, unleſs he will give conſiderably *more* than the Carcaſe Butcher: this is a known fact. The Carcaſe Butchers are men of large property, many have retired from buſineſs, and others are doing the ſame every day; while the Cutting

ting Butchers are decreaſing much, both in number and in circumſtances; nor dare many of them exhibit their grievances to the government or the public, being ſo much embarraſſed, and ſo entirely at the mercy of the overgrown Carcaſe Butchers.

A powerful reaſon why the price of meat is kept up, is, that the Cutting Butcher cannot, and dare not, ſay he will *not* have the beaſt or cattle or go elſewhere. What I have ſtated is a known fact, and might be proved by inſpecting the Carcaſe Butcher's accounts.

I ſhall make another obſervation reſpecting *foreſtalling* in Smithfield market: every market day, it is well known, there are a ſet of men called *jobbers*, who acquire a handſome livelihood by that means, but they have many methods of evading the preſent law, now in exiſtence;—there ſhould be a more powerful one, that ſhould be equally binding to the *buyer* and the *ſeller*, and it ſhould involve both a heavy fine and impriſonment; and a handſome reward ſhould be held out to the informer, that it might be worth their taking ſome trouble to detect, and bring ſuch nefarious agents to juſtice.

THE STATE AND MANAGEMENT OF GRAIN.

As the cultivation of every ſpecies of grain, is materially connected with the progreſs and advancement of *animal food*, reſpecting both its *exiſtence* and its *price*, I implore the Legiſlature to pay ſome attention to the following declaration—*viz. that one third of the produce of this land, is devoured by Horſes*, who conſume on an average half a buſhel of corn daily, and if the eſtabliſhment of Horſes were diminiſhed, we ſhould have more cows, more ſheep, more veal, more bread, butter, cheeſe, bacon, beer, ale, ſoap, candles, leather, wool, &c. &c. and ſhall ſuch a hoſt of bleſſings be blindly ſacrificed upon the polluted altars of FASHION. Good God! is there more ſolicitude to keep the equipage ſumptuous, then the People comfortable?—may that Epicurean periſh who upholds the chilling thought.

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Can the inclination of Dealers in proviſions, to oppreſs the poor be made more apparent than by their fatal wiles and hard heartedneſs during the laſt winter, in the management of POTATOES—in the raging of the ſeverities of the ſeaſon thoſe worthy monopoliſts, who had purchaſed immenſe quantities, at three ſhillings per hundred, *kindly* retailed them to the crying poor at twenty ſhillings per hundred, or two pence halfpenny per pound :—but mark the iſſue, and then form a judgment of the *real ſcarcity* :—when the Spring became promiſing, and in proportion as the Summer advanced, thoſe very Dealers receded from the points of extortion, and now are eager to ſell *Potatoes* at leſs than one penny per pound, as their ſtock is ſo very large, that they are apprehenſive great quantities will be ſpoiled ;—in the very height of the inclemency alluded to, Mr. PLAW of Putney ſold many tons to the BISHOP of LONDON, at the rate of five ſhilllings per hundred, which he thought an equitable price, and which the commiſſerating Prelate kindly diſtributed among the poor of his diſtrict. Now what concluſion can be adduced from this notorious and afflictive truth, but that they wantonly and impoſingly ſeized upon the pittance of the poor, for a neceſſary article of life, when in reality they were enabled to ſell *Potatoes* as cheap as ever, having *unuſual quantities* in their poſſeſſion.

The *Subſcriptions*, that have been called forth as a partial relief for the tumultuous Poor, at *Chicheſter*, *Arundel*, &c. &c. will prove very fallacious, and fall far ſhort of the intended effect—they muſt ſoon terminate, and as ſome have originated in a ſpirit of *benevolence* and *ſome of* FEAR, it is doubtful to what extent they may be continued.—Is this a time, for the vain and licentious to be ſupine? The NOBILITY will evince their regard for themſelves as well as the Poor, by ſacrificing a ſmall part of their luxuries to enjoy the remainder—they ſhould unanimouſly and inſtantly reject all deſcriptions of *ſoups* from their tables, one turene of which will conſume meat enough for twenty perſons ; and ſhall ſuch a

quantity

quantity of ſolid food be ſtewed down, in this ſeaſon of exigence, to pamper, not ſatiate, the appetites of one or two idle, worthleſs ſprigs of Diſtinction; while the virtuous and meritorious labourer is fainting at his loom for want of nouriſhment?

All theſe authentic repreſentations reſolve themſelves into the following order of miſery, *viz.*

1*ſt.* The Carcaſe Butcher, cauſes an advance of price in the markets of the metropolis, generally ſpeaking, of one penny, or three half-pence per pound, independent of natural neceſſity.

2*dly.* The Carcaſe Butcher, by this artificial management of the markets, gives birth to all that opprobrium and rage adminiſtered by the public towards the Cutting Butcher, who is innocent of the evil altogether.

3*dly.* The Carcaſe Butchers, have increaſed the number of beaſts they kill, and raiſed their demands for all, at this preciſe point of time, although the idea is circulated, that cattle were never ſo ſcarce in this century!

4*thly.* The Carcaſe Butchers, attend all the chartered markets within fifty miles of London; although thoſe markets were eſtabliſhed and intended for the accommodation of the Country Butchers, and not for the Carcaſe Butchers of Smithfield; and it is from this meaſure of monopoly, more than any other, that we are to aſcribe every misfortune, that has, or may ariſe, from the dearneſs of proviſions.—This is an alarming and increaſing evil, and muſt be completely done away by the government, for the preſervation of common happineſs and ſocial order.

As it is univerſally admitted that prevention is better than puniſhment, I fervently recommend the following reſolutions to be adopted and enforced under an heavy penalty, by all concerned in victualling purſuits, *viz.*

RESOLUTION

1ſt. Not to kill any *lambs*, from the firſt of June, for the enſuing year, as every thinking man muſt be convinced, that many have periſhed from the ſeverity of the weather.

2d. As from the preſent genial appearance of the ſeaſon, there is much probability that vegetation will be abundant, not to kill any *tegs*, which are one year old, or *lambs* of laſt year, which meaſure will lay the foundation of a vaſt increaſe of ſtock for a future period.

3d. That no Butcher, or other individual, be ſuffered to kill *heifers* or *oxen* under four years old.*

A COMPARATIVE STATEMENT of the TOLL of SMITHFIELD MARKET

For the firſt twelve weeks in the years 1794 and 1795.

January 3d. 1794.	
Beaſt.	Sheep.
2910	12950
2685	12930
2435	15640
2218	12650
2518	12970
2422	10840
2407	12890
2404	11160
2329	14140
2073	13480
2302	11480
2229	11290
28932	152420

January 2d. 1795.	
Beaſt.	Sheep.
2580	12830
3109	13580
2701	12110
2433	13640
2719	16980
2195	15030
2633	11570
2637	13990
2486	11320
2498	10930
3215	13130
3197	12470
32403	157580
28932	152420
3471	5160

By this correct ſtatement, it is evident, that the markets have increaſed this year conſiderably, notwithſtanding the practice of foreſtalling the cattle on the road, has been recently carried on more eagerly than ever.

If

* By being killed under that age, they have not that proportion of fat within, which is conducive to the good of the Butcher and Conſumer.

If the Legiſlature poſſeſs as great a portion of anxiety about the general ſuſtenance of the community, as they do about a few *pheaſants* and *partridges*, for their own particular and luxurious gratification, they will not heſitate, under the preſſure of circumſtances like the preſent, to paſs the above ideas into a law, which may be floating or permanent as exigencies require.

It ſhould be recollected, that no event can ſhake the baſis of any government ſo thoroughly, as the proſpect of a famine, or the circumlocution of fraud, in what regards the articles neceſſary to ſuſtain life:—every order of men are now called upon to reſiſt the inroads of impropriety—*when hunger is the impulſe to action*, they muſt be more than ordinarily gifted and protected, who can eſcape the ſummary vengeance of an inſulted, inflamed, and famiſhing community.—May the will of heaven and the wiſdom of our councils avert the impending ſtorm.